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else. If, in addition to this, our pupils are ladies according to the usual definition of the word, there will be no need for us to complain.

CONCLUSION.

1. We wish that the new school at Salpêtrière shall be considered to be a training school for nurses.
2. That the directress shall have the sole responsibility and management of it.
3. That lectures on morals be added to the lectures on theory and practice indicated in the program, and that these lessons be given by the directress.
4. That the present method of recruiting the pupils be absolutely abandoned, and that the pupils of the new school be admitted as far as is possible according to the English plan, that is, with the advice of the directress after a strict inquiry as to the morality of their conduct, and the surroundings in which they have lived.

THE ACTUAL CONDITIONS OF FRENCH HOSPITAL NURSING

By A. M. F. COLE

It is at the request of a well known American nurse, now working amongst the poor of Paris, that I write this paper for an American journal. In *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING* we have read comments on French nursing, and French hospitals, which show clearly a misapprehension of the present condition of both. The same mistaken impression prevails in England; and I have written, without prejudice, to an English journal, giving simple facts on both subjects.

I came to Paris expecting to find secular nurses carrying their profession further than may be possible for nuns, part of whose time and energy must be given to their religious life. An American nurse, an English nurse, a French lady with an extensive knowledge of French hospitals and nursing, and I have now, for some time, given attention to the subject of nursing in French lay hospitals. It is from our collective experience that I write now.

Certain hospitals, built and supported by private charity, and not at the disposal of the government, are still staffed by nuns. Amongst these I may mention "St. Joseph's," built by a private benefactor for the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, driven by the government from other hospitals; and the "Pasteur" adjoining the Pasteur Institute. In both

these hospitals we found excellent nursing; skilled, intelligent, and attentive; most considerate treatment of the patients; and discipline, order, and careful management throughout the institution. Excellent as these, and other hospitals under religious management undoubtedly are, the fact remains that nurses who are members of different religious communities, subject to various rules and superiors, cannot receive the professional training, discipline, and testing, necessary for the making of a uniform standard of hospital nursing. For that reason, the excellence of these religious hospitals did not prejudice my mind against the action of the government in substituting lay for religious nursing, in the great general hospitals. Some loss in tone and affection I anticipated. It seemed inevitable where voluntary service, for the highest motives, often by women of good family, gave place to work on a commercial basis by women of the working and commercial classes. But I expected to find a uniform training, discipline, and progress in the secular staffs, chosen and paid by the government.

Astonishment was my first sensation when I saw the nurses, and the nursing, in a first-rate French hospital. Physicians, surgeons, appliances, structures, were splendidly up to date. The nurses were untrained women, generally without desire or obligation to be trained, hired to attend on the patients, by the day or the night, paid good wages from the beginning, allowed either to live on the premises, or to live in their own homes. Often they are married women, working in the wards in addition to their own domestic duties. These women, many of whom look neither clean nor tidy, come into the wards that are faultlessly antiseptic and germ-proof, their ordinary clothing covered by a white linen blouse, often crumpled and put on anyhow, aprons tied untidily round their bunched figures, small muslin caps, often on untidy heads. Such, some a little better, some a little worse, are the "*infirmières*," or ordinary ward nurses in the laicized hospitals of Paris and of France. If they live in the hospital the accommodation provided for them is such as to prohibit the service of any superior class of women. Crowded dormitories, the beds almost touching each other, without sufficient furniture, tenanted by a majority who have to be forced to take a weekly or fortnightly bath! Bribery, by tips from patients and their friends, is a generally understood condition of extra attention, or indulgence, from *infirmières*. They are generally of the charwoman, or servant class, more or less respectable, kind, or intelligent.

The head nurses (*surveillantes*) in charge of so many wards, or of the patients under one physician or surgeon, have authority over the *infirmières*, and are responsible for the ward management. Generally

they have attended some course—or even courses—of instruction, and taken diplomas; but that is not obligatory. They sleep on the premises and may, in an emergency, be called up in the night. Except some difference in the cap, their uniform is like those of the *infirmières*; but theirs is generally neat, and well put on. Some are well informed, skilful, and experienced. But no standard of training or proficiency is specified, as necessary for a *surveillante*.

Such—in brief and bare outline—is the actual state of nursing in the lay hospitals of France generally. Those of Bordeaux, or sprung from Bordeaux, are under English management, and have no bearing on the subject of French nursing.

M. Mésureur seems to realize the gravity of the situation, produced by the ending of the old order, without any provision for the new. He is face to face with a vast difficulty. Any radical change in the present state of hospital nursing must begin with another general turning out. Unless, after that, *surveillantes* were imported from America, Ireland or England; and teachable young women engaged as *infirmières*, I do not see how training could be begun. Probably such a scheme would be condemned by a majority of the government.

So M. Mésureur will begin a reform by the training of nurses, by lectures, and by hours of ward-work in the hospitals. It seems that these pupils will not belong to any special hospital during their training. It is probable that some scheme will be thought out for their future employment and accommodation, before their training is finished. Under present conditions they could not live, or work, in any of the lay hospitals of Paris. Several private training schools have been in existence for some time. At the Salpêtrière a large public training school is already built. Probably this attempt to provide a number of trained nurses is the most that can be done at the moment.

Seeing the hordes of untrained women employed in the numerous and vast hospitals of Paris, the ignorance and indifference of public opinion with respect to hospital nursing, and the disrepute into which hospital nursing, as a calling, has fallen in France, it is plain that M. Mésureur is face to face with a situation too grave for any speedy mending. The fact that he realizes that situation, meets it honestly, and makes some beginning of a reform, is the only cheerful aspect of the subject. I write of what I know and what anyone may know who will visit the hospitals of Paris *under ordinary circumstances and as ordinary visitors*, ask for information from officials, and draw casual details from patients, and patients' friends.